

## **Declaration of Costa Rica**

***Eleventh Session of the Forum on Minority Issues, convened on the theme of Statelessness.***

***29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018, UN headquarters, Geneva  
Room XVII***

Nationality, beyond being a human right, provides people with a sense of identity that is necessary for absolute participation in society, and sometimes becomes a prerequisite for the enjoyment of all human rights.

Statelessness represents a human rights issue that affects more than 10 million people globally and it has a devastating impact, severely jeopardising their effective access to, and enjoyment of, a range of fundamental rights.

Costa Rica, State Party to the “Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons” of 1954 and to the “Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness” of 1961, has historically addressed these issues with a sense of humanity, and in particular with the belief that all human beings should enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms.

My country would like to humbly, yet proudly, share with you that one year ago our government signed a memorandum of understanding with the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in order to take important steps towards the elimination of statelessness.

Costa Rica is the first country on the American continent to implement regulations and procedures for the determination of the status of stateless persons. Our principal aim as a country and as a society is to ensure that all people have free and effective access to their right of nationality, which is why we are always working towards establishing people’s respective nationalities.

We are certain that, with the work carried out and achievements made, we will soon be able to confirm Costa Rica as a country in which statelessness has been eradicated.

In the design and organisation of these actions and procedures, the cross-institutional work and coordination has allowed not only the successful implementation of an apolitical, humanitarian and declaratory process for the determination of the status of stateless people, but it has also made significant progress in contributing to the registrations of births of those people who have a right to Costa Rican nationality, the verification and determination of nationality and the relaxation of the application procedures for naturalisation by residence of those people that have been declared stateless.

Costa Rica recognises and is grateful for the efforts of the United Nations System, not only in the design and realisation of multiple initiatives aimed at the prevention and reduction of statelessness, but also in its valuable assistance and guidance that it has provided to member States.

We respectfully urge the International Community to join a similar initiative, which must be collective and with the purpose of eliminating an injustice for all of society, such as statelessness. This forum appeals to all of us – states, civil society and important actors – to strengthen efforts and be vigilant. Let us put an end to statelessness now!

Thank you.